

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2-10 are presented for consideration. Claim 2 is the sole independent claim. Claims 12-17, 19 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, no new matter has been added. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuing application directed to the subject matter of these claims.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 2-10 have been indicated as being allowable over the art of record. Applicant further notes with appreciation that claims 14 and 15 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. These claims have not been so rewritten at this time because Applicant intends to present the subject matter of canceled claims 12-17, 19 and 20 in a continuing application.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 12, 13, 17, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,424,552 to Tsuji et al. Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Tsuji et al. patent in view of published U.S. patent application number 2002/0126268 to Matsumoto et al. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention, as previously recited in these claims. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

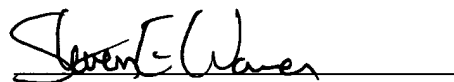
Nevertheless, as discussed above, claims 12-17, 19 and 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, in order to expedite allowance of this application. Accordingly, the only claims remaining in this application are claims 2-10, which have been indicated as being allowable. No changes have been made to these claims. Accordingly, Applicant submits that these claims should remain allowable.

Applicant submits, therefore, that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant believed that the prior Amendment placed the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is requested under 37 CFR 1.116.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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